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THE PROPOSED CHANGES AT HARVARD.

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CONCERNING WAYS AT HARVARD.

WHEN I observe, as I daily do, how different any one lad of my acquaintance is from any other lad of that same acquaintance, I wonder that any man of an active conscience, even if of great wisdom, can speak dogmatically, as many such men seem able to do, of any particular curriculum of education. Within the last few years there has come into use a word which intimates that to a fraction of young humanity at least, the once all-comprehending norms and dogmas may not be so unquestionably applied. The word is "atypical." It is used to define those who are appreciably out of the normal or the typical in aptitude, and it is accompanied now in many communities by special educational provision to meet the special lack. The State of Ohio, for example, a few years ago made an appropriation for the special training of a single child of a peculiar abnormality. But in a sense we are all atypical. There is difference only in the degree of atypical divergence. The old Scotchman who said to his wife, "All the world is queer except me and thee and thee is a

bit queer" came near speaking a truth that has not, as a rule, been clearly recognized by those doctrinaires who assume to frame systems of education for great masses of undifferentiated beings; for "each one of us belongs to a thousand classes." Dante was much more discriminating in his punishment of lost souls than are many "educators" in their categories and curricula of instruction for the living souls. What has so strongly and widely appealed to men, in the Harvard elective system, is its recognition of the individual and his peculiar variations, fitnesses and ambitions. What has made it less than ideal is that it has within certain bounds permitted and encouraged this lack of normality, allowing him that is atypically lazy to be lazy still, and him that is atypically righteous to be righteous still. The compulsions of intellectual conformity to type have not been such as to cast either of these into the outer darkness of the atypical. So much we are permitted to infer from President Lowell's rather optimistic lament over the intellectual disintegration of college life.

That nearly every college of importance in this country has followed (many at a long distance) this Harvard theory into a practice of electivism more or less free must connote something more than the mere leadings of fashion, which is potent even in matters academic. It has been a pathetic sight to witness in the colleges heroically struggling under or against deficits—this slow adding of the newer and, for the most part, more expensive knowledges. But they could have gained admission into the old curricula only as electives, and so I am inclined to think that what Harvard has done in giving such generous hospitality to disciplines a quarter of a century ago unrecognized, has far more than compensated for the uncouthness of a few of the guests. This hospitality shown by the first of American colleges has given opportunity to establish in others the group system (of prescribed and elective subjects) now widely in vogue in many American colleges, and under President Lowell to obtain formally and fixedly at Harvard, as indeed it has prevailed informally, of student choice and professional advice, during all the years of elective freedom. I doubt if the curricula of our colleges would to-day include as many of these subjects as they now have if the elective system had not been operative in some great leading college. Nearly every "branch" in President Lowell's scheme is now to be found even in the smaller and more conservative col-

leges. It is as if the great Chemist-President Eliot had gathered all the elements—all the disciplinary systematic knowledges, old and new—and tested their reactions upon the undergraduate mind, and that now his successor is to seek known and desired precipitates according to certain formulæ learned of these tests. Of course the undergraduate mind is still undetermined and indeterminate. Only a master who knows it collectively and individually is likely to select the most efficient series of reagents, the particular curricula that will procure the desired solution or precipitate; and he cannot always be certain. I stood beside a boy not long ago when he decided to take an ancient instead of a modern language as one of his major courses; and, realizing that this decision of a moment might change the whole course of his life, I felt the great responsibility of the adviser. Even if there is a divinity shaping the ends of these boys and young men, who come of their own desires or driven of others' to the gates of the curricula, still is there a responsibility resting upon the best judgment that can be procured for the "rough hewing" of these ends. And a conspicuous if not distinguishing feature of the new Harvard plans is that this judgment and its advice are to be assured wherever the student has electives to make.

The changes proposed at Harvard do not limit the electives. They are as rich and liberal as ever. The student under the new rule finds his major courses at least, predestined of his Freshman choice, under the providence of a committee that is instructed "to make exceptions freely in the case of earnest men who desire to make changes at a later time. . . ." The effect of this is to put a number of fairly rigid curricula (of many permutations) side by side for election in the Freshman year, each curriculum being vertebrate, with a prescribed number of vertebræ. This differs from the Johns Hopkins plan only in that it has more vertebrate curricula, and from the Princeton plan in that it requires an earlier election (at the end of the Freshman instead of Sophomore year, though the Princeton student's final and later choice is conditioned to some extent by his selection of Sophomore studies). It is interesting to learn that of a thousand Harvard graduates, 1908-09, twenty per cent. would have had to make no change at all, if obliged to choose according to the new system, a large percentage only the slightest change,

and fifty per cent. a change in but one or two courses. The restrictions touch only or chiefly the two extremes: the highly specialized scholars who concentrate too much and so become too narrow, and the highly specialized athletes who distribute too much and so make their knowledge shallow. The elective system, in becoming "really systematic," has seemingly not seriously restricted the franchise of the great body of students at Harvard. So has the elective subject system become crystallized, by a little shaking, into an elective group system, with the elimination of the extreme divergents or their conversion to group types.

Harvard has protected herself from a sequela of the free elective system which is menacing the integrity of the college degree in many of the great universities. There are powerfully organized agencies at work to standardize the entrance requirements of all colleges, and yet they seem to countenance the college student's leaving his liberal studies at the end of two or three years, taking up his professional or technical studies and getting his arts degree when he has finished these studies. Harvard University stands champion of the American college in substantially confining the professional schools to college graduates and confessedly "aiming at the higher strata in the professions." There is no more encouraging note in President Lowell's utterances than that which expresses the belief that "the college of the future has a great work to do for the American people"—a college which "can give freedom of thought, a breadth of outlook, a training for citizenship which neither the secondary nor the professional school in this country can give."

President Lowell's paternalistic or fraternalistic plans for the Freshmen are appealing. I have an impression that the social, economic and educational tendency is to prolong the period of mental and moral irresponsibility in youth. But no one who appreciates the perils of the sudden transition from school to college methods and ways can think of the interference here as the unwise coddling of a nourishing mother. Heine speaks of looking upon people as animated numerals. That is the danger of the other extreme, the treatment of a highly individualized character, intellect or soul as an "animated numeral." It will be most interesting to compare the advantages of a horizontal preceptorial system at Harvard with those of the perpendicular preceptorial system successfully in vogue at Princeton.

I make this incursion into a neighbor's affairs with some reluctance. The college windows and transoms behind which I live have suffered most from the stones of kindly and not malicious ignorance. I have been persuaded to enter this symposium by a gratitude to President Eliot's service (which was prerequisite to the course academic opinion and practice are now following) and by my appreciation of President Lowell's attitude toward those who are "feeling their way toward a more definite structure" for the American college, and of his interest, first of all, in touching the visions of the young men of the college. His plans for his own College give support to his prophecy concerning the American college of the future.

JOHN H. FINLEY.

PRESIDENT LOWELL'S CHANGES.

THESE changes proposed, though on their face somewhat unrelated, do logically and unitedly concern one thing—the training of manhood, and by the two methods or forces of thinking and of personality. These changes, therefore, can be most effectively discussed in the light of general principles.

The primary intellectual purpose of the college is (1) to discover and to express truth and (2) to teach the student to think. With the second of these two purposes only have we now to do. To think: to see truth and truths, to relate truth to truth, to infer new truth, to judge, to weigh evidence, to compare, to assess a fact at a just value, to reason: that is to think. A secondary purpose of the college is to make the scholar. But it is not the purpose either primary, or secondary even, to create in the student a human cyclopædia of knowledge, nor a library of facts, be the facts never so important or interesting. To make the thinker is the comprehensive and fundamental aim.

It can be, I believe, laid down as a general law that the more extended the pursuit of a single course of study the greater is its worth in creating the thinker: and the less extended the pursuit of a course the smaller is its worth in creating the thinker. The elements of a subject make their first appeal to the memory. The young student must first learn facts. These elements do not and cannot quicken and enlarge thinking as do the advanced processes and relations. Therefore, the student who selects many and different subjects is inevitably and constantly obliged to

devote himself to elements and to facts. He is not able to think upon the great truths which lie in the higher and remoter relations of any subject. To illustrate: Mr. A. B. of Harvard College is obliged to take some seventeen and one-half courses, of three hours each a week, in order to get a degree. Let Mr. A. B. divide these courses among a dozen or more different subjects: he may take a single course in Latin, which he has already studied in the fitting school, and a single course in mathematics, a subject in which also he brings some preparation, a course in French or German,—of one of which he probably knows something,—in Spanish, in Italian, in chemistry, in physics of manifold relations, in biology also of many divisions, in geology, in history, in economics, in philosophy, in psychology, in sociology, in English literature, in composition,—to name only the more common subjects. Now, no reasoning is required to prove that Mr. A. B., electing a single course in each of these many subjects, is obliged to be content with a knowledge the most superficial. Such a knowledge is a knowledge of the simplest facts and represents an acquaintance with relationships that are of the most general character. Mr. A. B. has gained some knowledge, but he has created for himself little or no power as a thinker. He has gained no sense of mastery. He has a bird's-eye view, and he has added to his brain just about the weight of the brain of a bird.

On the other hand, and to illustrate further: Let Mr. X. Y. elect his courses largely in two or three related subjects. Suppose they are constitutional history, philosophy and economics. In this case he is able to have four or five courses in each, though the division would not probably be equal. What is the method and what is the conclusion? In the constitutional history of the United States and of England he is obliged to enter into the consideration of the forces and motives which have created these two great and diverse methods of government. He is compelled to seek out tendencies, to judge of movements, to estimate results. In his study of economics he finds one of the most complex sets of phenomena which were ever given to the brain of man to analyze and to understand. If in his quest he seek to relate economic phenomena with governmental, as he naturally will seek to do, he will find material which will quicken or train keenest insight, delicate discernment and widest powers of induction.

But now, furthermore, and in still continued illustration, suppose that our student, who is now Mr. C. D., does not elect his studies in three so broad subjects as constitutional history, philosophy and economics. Let Mr. C. D. elect his work in mathematical physics alone or in Latin only. What will be the natural consequence? The natural consequence will be that he will know a good deal about mathematical physics or about Latin: but he will not know much about himself. He will be able to think in terms of physics and of Latin, but his thinking will have largely for its content physics or Latin. He will not be able to think in terms of life and of what life represents. He will still think, but his thinking will be narrow. He thinks in *slots*, he sees the skies from ruts which he has cut out for himself and in which he is obliged to move.

Therefore, to what I said at the beginning, that the primary purpose of the college is to teach the student to think, should be added to think effectively. The resulting thinking should be deep without being narrow, broad without being superficial, accurate without being cold or unhuman, appreciative of all without being open to the charge of intellectual dissipation.

The question may emerge, What is the test of the condition when breadth of thinking passes over into dissipation, when depth of thinking becomes narrowness of thinking? The problem is critical. The test, I believe, lies at just this simple point: where thinking loses its human relationship and becomes of primary interest to itself, when it ceases to be humanistic and becomes technical. When Mr. C. D. in Harvard College, or any man in any college, finds that his studies are making him think in terms of mathematics, or in terms of chemistry, or in terms of economics, the time of his peril has come. He better avoid the peril of dehumanizing himself by electing philosophy in place of mathematics, sociology in place of chemistry and Elizabethan literature instead of economics.

It may be added, in bringing to a close this part of the discussion, that this endeavor of President Lowell to avoid at once the perils of intellectual scattering and of intellectual narrowness is an endeavor which has in many colleges been essentially avoided in one of two ways: by obliging students to take a group of related subjects, while allowing certain liberty in free electives; or, by requiring students, while permitting a large liberty of

choice, to take a few courses in certain recognized fields of knowledge. Harvard College has done a great work for all colleges in the last forty years in presenting and promoting the free elective system. Some of these colleges, which have never seen fit fully to adopt this system, may now be able to serve the cause of liberal education by showing the methods and by explaining the principles upon which they have been acting in teaching man to think. The new method proposed at Harvard is essentially old at many good and strong colleges.

The question of the segregation of the Freshman is not far remote from the question of a certain limitation of the elective system. For both matters are only methods for the training and enriching of character. In both, too, personality is a force used, although it is used more dominantly in the life which separate Freshman dormitories are designed to foster.

The most critical year of the four college years is the Freshman. It is made critical by the youth of the men, by their responsiveness to whatever is offered, by the newness of conditions, by the lack of friendships, by the want of certain standards, and the lack of certain supports of intellectual and moral character. Most of these Freshmen are for the first time absent from their homes. The majority have come from the high schools of their towns or cities. Relatively few have come from such collegiate schools as Exeter or Andover or from what may be called the cloister schools. Those who are graduates of the collegiate Phillips Academies are not new men in any such sense as are the men who come from the high schools of their own home towns. These new men need—what? They need a home. And what is a home to these new men? It is primarily friendship: friendship sane, wholesome, quickening.

Such friendship may be furnished in one or all of at least three ways. It may be provided by upper classmen. The upper classmen represent an influence for and in the college over the Freshman of incalculable value. It is an influence which those upper classmen have not fully used, and of the potency of which they themselves seldom have a just appreciation. The college authorities, too, have not promoted its usefulness. It is a great reservoir of noble influence for the new men. A second source lies in the fraternity. At Harvard College the fraternity system is not developed as at most colleges. Perhaps it is just as

well that it is not so fully organized. But in most colleges the fraternity house is a home to Freshmen, and the members of the fraternity are their brethren. The secret-society system has ceased, the fraternity system has come in; and the change in fact is not less significant than the change in name.

A third source of influence for and over the Freshmen, and one which would normally have much worth for the Freshmen of Harvard College, is found in the presence of proctors, or advisers, or monitors, who lodge and live in each dormitory. Such resident officers are supposed to be friends to each Freshman living in his hall or on his stairway. But here is the rub, the point of difficulty, in any segregation of Freshmen. Stone walls will not defend Freshmen from intellectual or moral disintegration; a friend may. To get friends of the desired character for these Freshmen represents the most serious,—and its seriousness cannot be overestimated,—part of the large and complex problem. To get men of the type which Arnold wanted as his teachers at Rugby, of the type which Mr. Robert wanted forty years ago for his international college at Constantinople, has been, is and I suppose always will be a mighty struggle. Men whose intellects are large and rich, but whose hearts are neither gushing nor cold, men who are able to differentiate between a principle and a minor rule, men who have a conscience but who are not obstinately conscientious, men whose love for truth does not cause them to lose their love for boys, men who are great and strong in character, but who also are sympathetic, men who are a proper combination of both the mother and the father: such men it will be gravely difficult to secure. But such men put at the head of dormitories for Freshmen, with not over a dozen students under the care of each, would represent a mighty increase in the best influences of Harvard College, or of any other college, that seeks to transmute noble youth into noble men.

CHARLES F. THWING.

THE CARE AND CULTURE OF FRESHMEN.

It is generally recognized that the most pressing problem of higher education in America to-day is the care of the under classman, the Freshman, and the Sophomores. We have been made acutely aware of our deficiencies, real and imaginary, in the matter of scientific research, and a great effort has been made to

remedy our defects in this regard, or to conceal them, which, to some minds, is equally satisfactory. The young instructor has been urged to place as many printed pages as possible to his credit, and in doing so has been encouraged to look with scorn on the "mere teacher" who cares for the intellectual welfare of the students without making himself "known in Germany." In so far as this movement was earnest, a real desire to promote scholarship and to encourage zealous men to do their part to widen the boundaries of knowledge, it was a movement thoroughly good; but in so far as it tended to encourage pretence, publication for publication's sake, and to discourage good teaching in colleges, it has been rightly discredited, and a reaction has already set in. In any event, we must recognize that all scholars must pass through a larval stage, and that research students and advanced students of all types must, at some time, have been Freshmen. On the excellence of their Freshmen training their superstructure of higher work must, in large part, depend.

It is, moreover, becoming recognized that the whole question of the training of the lower classmen depends on personal attention. We cannot expect individual development from "students herded like sheep on an Australian farm." It is necessary for some one to "know each one by name," to recognize his individuality, and to visualize his possibilities.

The "care and culture" of Freshmen naturally divides itself into two elements, training in personal habits and training in scholarship. Training in personal habits must be effected by some positive method, requiring action and vigilance. There is no way of obtaining results without effort. The German system of "laissez faire" in University discipline, each student to do as he pleases, and no questions asked, will not suffice in America. Our students enter the University two years lower than in Germany, as measured by scholastic requirements, and their previous training is not that of the iron drill of the gymnasium. The system of "laissez faire" does not work well in Germany, where there is already a strong movement towards moral discipline in the Universities. The wanton waste of life and character in these institutions has been simply horrifying. Bismarck is quoted as saying that, of the German University students, "one-third drink themselves to death, one-third die of overwork, the others govern Europe."

In brief, the college must furnish its lower classmen with advisers of some kind, men who come near the students, men whom the students can trust, and who, at the same time, are in touch with the highest ideals the University teachers represent. Half the weakness and folly of college students comes from their not knowing any better. If they knew where their professors stood in moral questions, they would tend to stand with them. Hence the importance, for the sake of morals, that the teachers should know the students, and that they should feel personal responsibility for them.

This is, of course, not that the professors have something to learn from the student or the student point of view. They do learn from this sometimes; but the main thing is that students should know the professors' point of view. If they have a chance to find out what it is, they will soon come to respect it.

The professors cannot be police officers, nor employ police methods. This goes without saying. It is necessary, on the other hand, that they should stand strongly against the student vices, against cheating, gambling, dishonest behavior, yellow journalism, and all forms of alcoholic conviviality. Whatever one's views as to beer and wine may be, there is no question that the lighter alcoholics are the curse of college life. Their use to promote good fellowship among students is most fatal to everything which should be characteristic of University training. From the "beer-bust" of the College to the red-light district of the town, the way is short and straight, and thousands of young men find themselves ruined for life from a single night of excesses.

The College fraternity and its chapter-house constitute an agency which may be used for good, a means of civilization with which college faculties should co-operate. But most college faculties "fight shy" of these organizations, letting them take their own courses uncontrolled, because to direct them aright is a matter requiring tact and effort. For that reason, many chapter-houses, East and West, are centres of corrosion, of idleness, drunkenness, and worse. The whole fraternity system is in bad repute, because of its abuses; and for these abuses the apathy of college faculties is wholly responsible. The entire matter is under the control of the colleges. In these matters, as in the abuses of athletics, our college authorities assume a curiously detached attitude, as though these were evils of the age beyond their power of

abatement. Yet they have all the authority there is. There is no evil in college life which is not there through the negligence of those who occupy the place of control.

It does not matter in these cases what rank the advisers of the Freshmen may hold, so long as they are adequate for their task, so long as they have faith in their own teachings, and the courage, tact and sympathy necessary to make their efforts effective.

The details in the case are of minor consequence. In Harvard, it is proposed to segregate the Freshmen, that they may be trained by themselves, without the disturbing influence of the upper classmen. In other institutions, the Freshmen are more or less purposely mixed with the upper classmen in order that the latter may help them by their wider experience, and that this responsibility may react by giving the upper classmen themselves more serious views of college opportunities. Mere segregation of the Freshmen has no special value in itself. If Freshmen and Sophomores could be given a group of detached buildings in some suburb not too far away, at Andover, let us say, while the University is at Cambridge, it would be a most interesting experiment. In such case the equipment of books and apparatus might be scanty. The real test would be in the selection of these teachers. These should be not newly fledged doctors of philosophy, but men with whom the training of youth is a chosen life-work. In such a segregation of class room and dormitory, and a standing apart from the crowd, there would be many elements of advantage; but to the brightest students there would be disadvantages as well. Such men look forward beyond the day, and the libraries and laboratories of a great University may be an inspiration even to a Freshman. Men work better when they see a goal ahead. Besides all this, all class emphasis of the colleges is laid in the wrong place. We have already too much of class spirit, class loyalty, and the friendships and enmities which have only an imaginary basis.

Whatever the system of handling Freshmen, there should be an evident purpose behind it, and this purpose should be a moral one. There should be a constant effort for the repression and extirpation of vice, and the reason should be made clear that vice is destructive to manhood. It is an incentive to manliness for a boy to see that the college values manhood. It adds to his respect for higher education to see that his teachers are not cowards, but

that they are ready to set themselves squarely against abuses in student life, whatever the pressure of tradition or sentiment.

The question of scholarship hinges likewise on personal attention. If the teachers do not seem to care, the habit of carelessness will grow among students. In our college curriculum in the past thirty years, we have seen about four distinct stages. The first is the classical stage, when each student was supposed to become, in a degree, a specialist in Latin and Greek, with a dash of higher mathematics for mental strengthening, and a little of outworn philosophy to give him a proper attitude towards life. The course was based on a consistent theory—that of the literary value of Greek, which deserves every good thing ever said in its favor—that of the practical and disciplinary value of Latin and Calculus, which was more or less exaggerated. The general idea was that no other combination was quite the equal of this for bringing out the intellectual possibilities of the growing student.

All this was prescribed work, the student taking what was before him and asking no questions. The great body of young men passed by on the other side, entering on life without college training, and became self-made men.

The second condition I have called the patchwork stage. The progress of science demanded attention in our scheme of higher education; and not one science, but a dozen. The modern languages have each a literature demanding the attention of the scholar, while each in turn was insistent as a necessary tool in every learned profession. Economics arose from the position of a discredited branch of philosophy to be a curriculum by itself, and the aggregate demand of all these broke down the discipline of the classical régime. One subject after another from the modern list was inserted, crowding out a corresponding portion of the ancient discipline. Greek, the most valuable part of it, was first to go, while Latin and Mathematics were condensed into smaller and smaller space.

Then different courses of prescribed study took the place of the single course. The omission of Greek, by a singular freak of nomenclature, stamped the course as one in Philosophy. The omission of Latin marked a course in Science, and then, to intensify our troubles, arose the need for courses in Engineering, and these, too, culminated in the degree of Bachelor of Science.

The failure of the patchwork system was speedily evident. It is

not possible for a student to know much of anything when he is required to know a little of everything else. The thorough knowledge of something is the backbone of education. To know some one thing well, it does not matter so much what it is, is to gain self-respect. It gives a base-line by which one can measure the attainments of others. It helps us to "know a good man when we see him," which William James has declared to be one of the greatest aims of higher education. Sound knowledge of any kind preserves its possessor alike from assertive vanity and from limp humility. Moreover, no prescribed course of general culture was found possible. No educational leader, still less no consensus of educational philosophers, could decide what subjects would bring culture to men they had never seen.

A prescribed course in Engineering, or in any field in which one subject follows another, and each is dependent on the preceding, has the respect of the student. He can see the causes which control, and he can see the end to which the work leads. No one complains of prescribed courses, when the relation of subjects to the final end makes the prescription natural and inevitable. No medical student complains because Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry, Pharmacology and Bacteriology are prescribed. No student in German Literature complains that the grammar comes before Faust or Nathan der Weise. A prescribed course, where the parts are not inevitably interrelated, is an outgrowth of educational laziness and apathy. It is the acme of neglect, and whatever else we may do in the way of educational reform, we shall not return to prescribed courses of general culture.

The natural breakdown of the patchwork system made the elective system inevitable. There was so much to be learned that some one must choose which to take and which to omit. The right choice was the one associated with the personality of the student. The task of choosing is of itself an education, and as more depends on the teacher than on the subject, the student, after all, is the one to decide. It is for his interest to seek the most helpful subjects, to find the most helpful teachers.

And with the elective system established in whole and in part, the Universities and Colleges grew by leaps and bounds. Enthusiasm came back to the class-room, teachers improved as well as scholars, and the Universities found themselves as in a single night strong, popular, and populous.

And with those who wanted a college education, and wanted the best, and having *Lernfreiheit*, found what they wanted, came those who wanted nothing but sport, social prestige and access to the University Clubs. As the strong men used their freedom to their own advantages, so the idlers and "the tender rich" used the elective system to secure the name of education without its substance. The gigantic cancer of the professional coaching system grew up in the great college to help this condition along. It was an evil of the elective system, that men could use the system to avoid its function. Yet, as President Angell has pointed out, no system ever made effective the college career of idle and dissolute men. They got but little out of the elective system. They would have got as little out of any other. The remedy lies not in the change of the system, but in getting rid of this type of men, and of the coaching system which makes their continued existence in college possible.

But there is room for improvement in the elective system, and that lies in the direction of personal sympathy and personal advice. No educational advancement comes from forbidding a man to do work he wants to do. The right direction of control is to lead a man to take what he ought to want, and the first thing he ought to want is a definite line of operation. He wants a vertebral column to his education. He should choose his specialty early, and then build up his training to this specialty and around it. He should master the group to which it belongs, and he should master other and perhaps distant groups if these are needed for his final effectiveness.

In this, he needs advice, and his adviser should not be taken by chance, but should be some man who has succeeded where he hopes to succeed.

The new system at Harvard is a useful aid to the elective system, not a check to it, for checking never aids scholarship, but a feature of strengthening guidance. The student is led, not driven, to choose his field, to block out his course and to move forward to his chosen end.

The life-work of the student is chosen under advice, and this is the strong point of this system. To offer prescribed courses is simply to abandon control to tradition. To allow absolutely free election is to leave the student to his own devices. An elective course, taken under constant advice and supervision, enables

the teacher to enter actively into the student's life. Its value depends on the seriousness and intelligence the adviser displays.

The writer does not think well of the system of student advisers (locally known as "nurses") in vogue at Harvard. This staff is composed, as I understand it, of young instructors, among whom the Freshmen are distributed alphabetically or in some other arbitrary fashion. The adviser should be a man whose aspirations are in line with those of the student, but more far-reaching. A young chemist needs an older chemist as his adviser, not a student of Italian art or Scandinavian poetry. Moreover, it is questionable whether the general management of a committee of professors is as effective as the system of holding each of the different departments responsible for its own.

In Stanford we have reached the ends sought at Harvard by machinery a little different. We think our way, on the whole, the better, else we should have taken some other, being free to choose. Ours is known as the Major Professor System. Each student on matriculation chooses his "major subject" or department. The professor in this subject or some other member of the staff, as the work is divided, becomes his adviser in all educational matters. The adviser of the chemist is a professor of Chemistry; of a Latin major, a professor of Latin. A certain percentage of the work for graduation, usually about one-third, is taken in this major subject, or in closely related subjects, to be indicated to each student individually on learning his powers and his tastes. Other subjects collateral, or even remote, may be required at the professor's discretion. In general, however, the work is freely elective, but each term's study card must bear the professor's approval. The student can change his major subject at any time, but must then make up the back work in the new department chosen. This scheme makes the professor an active factor in the education of the student. Its success is in proportion to the thought the professor gives to it. It ensures continuity of purpose without losing any of the desirable flexibility of the elective system. It has been in operation at Stanford University for nineteen years; and still longer in Indiana University and elsewhere. In some form, the system which makes a major professor the student's adviser seems to me to form the most practicable and most desirable adjunct of the elective system.

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